DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 905 CS 506 491

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TITLE Religious Broadcasting. Focused Access to Selected Topics (FAST) Bibliography No. 7.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 89
CONTRACT RI88062001
NOTE 4p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audience Analysis; *Broadcast Television; *Mass Media Role; Programing (Broadcast); *Religion; Television Viewing
IDENTIFIERS Evangelical Christians; Media Government Relationship; *Religious Broadcasting; *Televangelism

ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography on religious broadcasting contains 23 references of articles in the ERIC database. The first section of this FAST Bib lists sources which relate to the historical development of religious broadcasting. The next section looks at the role that television plays in religious broadcasting. A section on the Christian Right examines the role evangelicals have played in making religious broadcasting so pervasive on television. The government and its relationship to religious television, specifically regulation by the FCC, is considered in several articles and papers cited in the fourth section. The last section looks at additional issues that are currently being researched in communications and reading. (MS)

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Focused Access to Selected Topics
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Religious Broadcasting

by Michael Shermis

FAST Bib No. 7 RCS

Televangelists have been receiving a large amount of attention in the news. Along with concern over personalities, however, there is a renewed interest in the medium itself and in its impact on its viewers. Documents in the ERIC database treat questions such as these: Why does the "electronic church" have such a broad appeal? Who are those who watch "televangelists"? What influence does the Christian Right have on media view-ers? Has the religious broadcasting industry received unconstitutional aid from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)?

The first section of this FAST Bib lists sources which relate to the historical development of religious broadcasting. The next section looks at the role that television plays in religious broadcasting. A section on the Christian Right examines the role evangelicals have played in making religious broadcasting so pervasive on television. The government and its relationship to reigious television, specifically regulation by the FCC, is considered in several articles and papers cited in the fourth section. The last section looks at a few other issues that are currently being researched in communications and reading.

Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the FAST Bib format. The ED numbers for sources included in *Resources in Education* (RIE) have been included to enable the user to go directly to microfiche collections, order from the ERIC Document Reproductive Service (EDRS), or go to RIE for the full abstract on those sources not available through EDRS. The citations to journals are from the *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE), and these article can be acquired most economically from library colections or through interlibrary loans. Reprint services are also available from University Microfilms International (UMI) and from the Original Article Tearsheet Service (CATS) of the Institute for Scientific Information.

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The History of Religious Broadcasting

Neuendorf, Kimberly A., *et al.* "The history and social impact of religious broadcasting." Paper presented at the 70th Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1987. 35 pp. [ED 284 229]

Provides an informative review of scholarly treatments of the history of religious broadcasting in the United States, tracing the evolution from early broadcasts of simple church services to today's evangelical paid-time programming. Traces recent developments in the structure of religious television, and identifies three major trends: 1) the growth of high-energy, entertaining evangelical presentations; 2) the adoption of the broadcast/cable network system; and 3) the adaptation of traditionally secular television formats to the religious task. Describes the viewership of religious television via a review of pertinent research literature, identifying a shift away from the stereotypical older, female viewer. Explores the potential social effects of religious television.

Frankl, Razelle. "A hybrid institution," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5 (3), September 1988, pp. 256-259.

Discusses the history and development of religious broadcasting. Suggests that the growth and structure of religious fare is the result of a good fit between the needs of the evangelical community and the dynamics of the television medium.

Religious Broadcasting and Television

Abelman, Robert. "The allure for viewers," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5 (3), September 1988, pp. 259-265.

Examines the viewers of religious programming, the allure of televangelism, and how the electronic church has become good television and effective mass communication.

Bluem, A. William. *Religious Television Programs: A Study of Relevance.* New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1969. [ED 030 826; not available from EDRS.]

Examines religious program activity of over 430 television stations on such matters as weekly hours of program time, program types and styles, and subjective evaluations of the value and professional quality of programs used or created by the stations. Finds that the numerous local broadcasts consisted either of worship, inspiration, and meditation (the largest category); programs of religious information, orientation, and education (including those designed for children and youth); or seasonal, holiday, and memorial programs, many of which employed music, drama, or dance.

Buddenbaum, Judith M. "Characteristics and media-related needs of the audience for religious TV," *Journalism Quarterly*, 58 (2), Summer 1981, pp. 266-272.

Concludes that viewing religious programing on television is positively correlated to the need to know oneself better and is negatively correlated to the need for entertainment.

Christians, Clifford G., and Fortner, Robert S. "The media gospel," *Journal of Communication*, 31 (2), Spring 1981, pp. 190-199.

Examines four recent books on the religious media: Ben Armstrong's The Electric Church, *James F. Engel's* Contemporary Christian Communications: Its Theory and Practice, *Malcolm Muggeridge's* Christ and the Media, *and Virginia Stem Owens'* The Total Image: or Selling Jesus in the Modern Age. *Evaluates the internal validity of each.*

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Gantz, Walter, and Kowalewski, Paul. "Religious broadcasting as an alternative to TV: An initial assessment of potential utilization of the Christian Broadcasting Network alternative." Paper presented at the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, 1979. 32 pp. [ED 175 015]

Examines levels of satisfaction with present television programming; awareness of and exposure to religious broadcasts; motivations for exposure to "The 700 Club," a nationally syndicated religious program; and potential utilization of Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) alternatives to traditional television fare. Finds that there was marked dissatisfaction with present television fare among a sizable segment of the sample; more respondents were aware of religious broadcasting than watched it; seeking spiritual guidance was the most important factor influencing exposure to "The 700 Club"; the greatest interest in alternative programming was for prime time and early evening news; and no strong and systematic relationship existed between satisfaction with present programming and interest in the CBN alternative.

Gerbner, George, *et al. Religion and Television.* Princeton, N.J.; Pennsylvania University, Philadelphia, 1984. [ED 271 095]

Investigates the nature of religious television, its viewers, and its effect on mainline or other local churches. Finds that: 1) those who watch more general television are less likely to have had a religious experience, to attend church often, to engage in non-worship activities, or to make contributions to their local church; and 2) heavy viewers of religious programs are more likely than non-viewers to describe themselves as conservatives, oppose a nuclear freeze, favor tougher laws against pornography, and report voting in the last general election.

Schultze, Quentin J. "The mythos of the electronic church," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 4 (2), September 1987, pp. 245-261.

Considers the broad appeal of broadcast evangelism among conservative American Protestants. Defines, describes, and examines the mythos as represented in the rhetoric of various well-known broadcast evangelists and their trade association, National Religious Broadcasters. Criticizes the mythos as a possible agenda for further inquiry.

Schultze, Quentin J. "Researching televangelism." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5 (3), September 1988, pp. 271-275.

Examines the current state of empirical research on religious television, discusses some of the implicit difficulties in exploring this phenomenon and its viewership, and suggests avenues for future research.

Religious Broadcasting and the Christian Right

Copeland, Gary A., and Davis, Donald M. "Political and social issues as predictors of attending to religious broadcasts." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association, 1984. 15 pp. [ED 252 906]

Examines the political and social issues that best predict attendance to religious broadcasts. Finds that fundamentalist issues, political distrust, political power, and political knowledge tended to be the areas of distinction between viewers and nonviewers of religious broadcasts.

Johnston, Michael. "The new Christian Right and the powers of television." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1986. 31 pp. [ED 280 785]

Discusses the pervasiveness of broadcast religion with the emergence of television. Suggests that televangelism can best be regarded as a dialogue between communicators and audiences, not a magical tool by which the few manipulate the behavior of the many.

Virts, Paul H. "The electronic church debate in historical perspective: An analysis of the split between ecumenical and evangelical/independent religious broadcasters." Paper presented at the 66th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, 1980. 33 pp. [ED 197 399]

Contends that the break between ecumenical and evangelical religious broadcasting can be attributed to a failure of the evangelical churches to present a united front in the early days of radio until long after the ecumenical churches, united in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (FCCC), had begun cooperating with commercial radio networks. Suggests that the split between ecumenical and evangelical broadcasting was caused by each group's different view of the nature and purpose of the church – spiritual versus social.

Religious Broadcasting and the Government

Abrams, Michael F. "The FCC and the electric church." Columbia, Missouri: Freedom of Information Center, 1980. 7 pp. [ED 182 784]

Focuses on the relationship between the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and religious broadcasters. Summarizes some of the decisions made by regulating agencies and courts concerning religious broadcasting.

Griffin, Keith H. "Rubbing the devil's nose in it: PTL's Jim Bakker under investigation." Paper presented at the 51st Annual Meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association, 1981. 11 pp.[ED 206 039]

Discusses the problems of well-known religious broadcaster, Jim Bakker, head of the "PTL Club" (People That Love). Reviews the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) investigation and Bakker's subsequent rhetorical strategy in response to it.

Jackson, Gordon. "Electronic religion and the separation of church and state." Paper presented at the 64th Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, 1981. 18 pp. [ED 204 761; paper copy not available from EDRS.]

Examines the rise of "electronic religion" (religious broadcasting on radio and television) in the United States and the movement's fusing of religious and political issues during the 1980 election year. Analyzes the potential political influence of these broadcasters and the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) possible problem with exempting religious programming from the fairness doctrine's requirements because such programming is seen as being noncontroversial by definition.

Netteburg, Kermit. "Religious broadcasting, the establishment clause, and Federal Communications Commission regulatory policy." Paper presented at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, 1980. 28 pp. [ED 191 039]

Examines the question of whether the religious broadcasting industry has indirectly received unconstitutional aid from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Reviews individual FCC cases involving religious programing and religious broadcasters, the constitutional meaning of the establishment clause, and the limits the courts have set on governmental relationships with religion. Finds that there is no evidence that the FCC has contributed to the establishment of religion.

Virts, Paul H. "Trends in the regulation of religious broadcasting." Paper presented at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, 1979. 18pp. [ED 184 172; printed copy not available from EDRS.]

Discusses the historical basis of the government's regulation of religious broadcasting.

Other Issues Related to Religious Broadcasting

Appel, Edward C. "The perfected drama of Rev. Jerry Falwell," *Communication Quarterly* 35 (1) Winter 1987, pp. 26-38.

Enhances the grammatical and formal features of drama through the application of Kenneth Burke's "principle of perfection" and nine "indexes of dramatic intensity" to study the tragic-symbol preaching of Rev. Jerry Falwell. Finds that Falwell's televised discourses represent remarkably "perfected" and strong dramas.

Corder, Lloyd E. "Charisma and Christianity: Is Jimmy Lee Swaggart a cynic?" 1988. 21 pp. [ED 291 119]

Discusses the successes of television evangelists including Oral Roberts, Jim Bakker, Robert Schuller, and Jimmy Swaggart, both in terms of finances and in conversion of souls. Classifies the television preachers in four categories: evangelicals, fundamentalists, Pentecostals, or charismatics. Analyzes Swaggart's leadership style with the use of Max Weber's definitions of political leadership to determine that it is charismatic. Utilizes Theodore Windt's characteristics of political leadership to give further insight into Swaggart's charisma.

Hoover, Stewart M. "Audience size: Some questions," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5 (3), September 1988, pp. 265-271.

Identifies the significance of the long-running debate regarding the size of the religious television audience among religious broadcasting professionals and religious practitioners.

Kemp, Alice Manion (Ed.) *Conference in Rhetorical Criticism: 16th Annual Address of the Annual Conference and Commended Papers, 1981*. 17 pp. [ED 234 461]

Uses fantasy theme analysis—specifically the three fantasy theme myths of the Hero, the Fellowship, and the Sacrifice—to examine the so-called "electronic church," today's television ministry.

Krohn, Franklin B. "The language of television preachers: The marketing of religion," *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics*, 38 (1), Spring 1981, pp. 51-63.

Examines the verbal and nonverbal language characteristics of several renowned television preachers. Argues that they have identified and segmented their market to exploit more fully the television market and that they have mastered promotional and advertising skills. Proposes governmental controls of some aspects of religious broadcasting.

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1989

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI88062001. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.